

VZCZCXYZ0004  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHKO #1494 1510820  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 300820Z MAY 08  
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4686  
INFO RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0023

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 001494

SIPDIS

FOR WHA/CCA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/30/2013  
TAGS: PREL ETRD ETTC CU JA  
SUBJECT: LIBERTAD ACT: JAPAN RESPONSE

REF: A. STATE 52541  
¶B. TOKYO 1380

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer. Reason 1.4 (b)(d)

¶1. (C) In response to request contained in Ref A, Embassy Poloff met May 29 with Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mexico and Central America Division Cuba Desk Officer Fusae Tsunoda to discuss Japan-Cuba relations. Below are answers to specific questions raised in reftel.

¶Q. Are there any exchange programs between host country and Cuba?

¶A. Japan gives academic scholarships to 2-3 college students every year, part of a world-wide program. In addition, relationships between individual universities in Havana and Tokyo involve student exchanges.

¶Q. Has the host country, in Post's opinion, worked to promote the advancement of democracy and human rights in Cuba?

¶A. In connection with the May 21 Day of Solidarity with the Cuban People, the Japanese Ambassador to Cuba, Akira Takamatsu, invited Cuban Vice President of the Council of State Carlos Lage to the Ambassador's Residence, expressing Japan's desire for democratic change in Cuba (ref B). Highlighting Asian countries such as Indonesia and South Korea as models for how democratization and economic development can coincide, Takamatsu emphasized the importance of increasing political participation and freedom of speech in Cuba.

¶Q. Has the host country made other public statements or undertaken other governmental actions, such as resolutions in the national assemblies condemning human rights abuses in Cuba; statements in support of democracy following the undemocratic succession of power from Fidel to Raul Castro; or actions in support of civil society in Cuba through host country's diplomatic missions or other fora?

¶A. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a public statement February 2008 expressing hope for democratization in Cuba.

¶Q. Have there been any high-level diplomatic visits between Cuba and host country in the past six months?

¶A. The Japanese Senior Vice Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism visited Cuba in January 2008 to observe conservation of historical sites as well as to survey Cuba's tourism industry.

¶12. (SBU) Embassy also consulted with the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry's Latin America and Caribbean Division on the status of Japan Cuba trade and investment relations. There have been no new Japanese investments in Cuba over the past six months and no new bilateral trade agreements between Japan and Cuba. Japan Cuba trade is

governed by the Japan Cuba Trade Agreement of 1960. Two-way monthly trade ranges between JPY 700 million (USD 6.7 million) and JPY 1.6 billion (USD 16 million) per month, with the balance in Japan's favor. Total trade in the first four months of 2008 was JPY 3.01 billion (approximately USD 30 million) in Japanese exports to Cuba and JPY 569 million (approximately USD 5.5 million) of Japanese imports from Cuba. Major Japanese imports from Cuba are shrimp and other food products. Japanese exports to Cuba consist primarily of consumer electronics and medical equipment.

SCHIEFFER